

DC Wrap: Morning Consult's Williams says economy is the top issue for voters

Posted on Thursday, Oct 15, 2020

Welcome to our weekly DC Wrap, where we write about Wisconsin's congressional delegation. Sign up here to receive the newsletter directly: <https://forms.gle/YLYZtjWHPSt24HhZ7>

Quotes of the week

"The Department of Labor has yet to promulgate pandemic emergency standards to share with employers, schools and other places of business how they can safely reopen."

- *U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, accusing the Trump administration of a lack of leadership.*

"Congress should provide the funding to make the vaccine available to those who wish to take it, and we should prioritize making the vaccine available to our frontline healthcare workers and employees of essential businesses."

- *U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany, R-Minocqua, on vaccine distribution.*

This week's news

— **Morning Consult reporter Claire Williams says polling from her organization shows concerns about the economy are by far the most pressing issue on voters' minds ahead of the presidential election.**

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or](#)

[access via desktop.](#)

That largely matches analysis provided to WisPolitics.com by a number of pollsters over the course of the two-day Midwest Polling Summit.

Williams, who covers financial policy and the economy, also told WisPolitics.com's DC Wrap Interview Series a Morning Consult analysis shows consumer confidence has dropped sharply among swing voters in Wisconsin in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

She couldn't say definitively how that drop in confidence would affect the outcome of the presidential race. But she did say that means swing voters are "not thinking as positively about the economy, which is one of Trump's big issues."

"Maybe they're not feeling as positive about that as the Trump campaign would like them to," she added.

See the interview:

— Pollsters say the difference between the upcoming presidential election and the race in 2016 is a shrinking middle ground of undecided voters caused by deeply entrenched partisanship and a lack of prominent third-party candidates.

Barry Burden, director of UW-Madison's Elections Research Center, said during the second day of WisPolitics.com's Midwest Polling Summit that Donald Trump's surprise win in 2016 was fueled in part by voters opting for candidates outside the two major parties. But said he didn't anticipate a repeat of that behavior this year.

"That third-party vote is really going to be squished down to a very small number this time around, and I think that presents some challenges for Trump," he said.

This time around, Burden said third-party and nonvoters from 2016 are now "very much on (Joe) Biden's side."

"It's not impossible that Trump could claw back and pull this together but I think right now, it's difficult to see what that path is," he said.

Sarah Simmons, a veteran GOP pollster who now works at Purple Strategies, offered a less optimistic prognosis for the president.

“I got an email this morning from a Republican pollster friend that just said, ‘total collapse,’” she said. “He was trying to hold the line when we talked earlier in the week and he just said, ‘No, it’s really bad.’”

See more [here](#).

See the video from Day 2 of the event [here](#).

— Joe Biden leads Donald Trump by three points among likely Wisconsin voters aged 50 and over, according to a poll released Oct. 8 by AARP and the Benenson Strategy Group and discussed at Day 1 of the WisPolitics.com Midwest Polling Summit.

Forty-nine percent of that demographic backed the Dem nominee while 46 percent favored the president, within the 3.8 percent margin of error. The new poll finds the race is one point closer than in AARP’s Wisconsin survey last month. That poll had Biden at 50 percent, Trump unchanged at 46 percent.

The poll did not ask about third party candidates — respondents were instead given the option of selecting “other.” Pollster Amy Levin said that designation plus undecided voters made up 5 percent of the survey.

The biggest swing group within that demographic, Levin said Oct. 8 during the first day of the WisPolitics.com Midwest Polling Summit, was voters aged 65 and over. Levin said Trump won voters in that age group by a 1-point margin in 2016, but they now favor Biden by 11 points.

Still, Trump has made headway with that group since AARP’s September poll, which found Biden with a 17-point edge among voters over age 65.

Levin says the biggest “jump ball” issue now is the economy.

— Earlier in the first day of the Midwest Polling Summit, Pew Research

Center's director of political research said national polls show Joe Biden with a stable lead even as the presidential race has been "bombarded" with big news.

Pew's Carroll Doherty said poll aggregators and his own center's work show the Dem nominee with a lead of somewhere between 7 and 9 points.

He attributed the stability in part to the lack of prominent third-party candidates. And among those who did vote third-party in 2016, Doherty said Pew data set to be released later this evening shows many are "migrating to the Biden camp."

Along with third-party voters, Doherty agreed undecided voters who in 2016 propelled Trump over the finish line are now distinctly less keen on the president.

See more [here](#).

See the AARP poll [here](#).

— Joe Biden has a 10-point edge on Trump in the latest New York Times/Siena College poll of likely Wisconsin voters.

The survey, released Oct. 12, found 51 percent backed Biden, while 41 percent supported Trump and 3 percent backed Libertarian Jo Jorgensen.

The last Marquette University Law School Poll had Biden at 46 percent and Trump at 41 percent with Jorgensen at 4 percent. That survey was in the field Sept. 30-Oct. 4. The New York Times/Siena College poll was conducted roughly a week later, in the field Thursday through Sunday.

The New York Times/Siena College poll also found:

*44 percent approved of Trump's job performance, while 53 percent disapproved.

*55 percent had a favorable impression of Biden, while 42 percent had an unfavorable one.

*44 percent supported Amy Coney Barrett's nomination, while 39 percent opposed it. Forty-four percent said a confirmation vote should come before the election,

while 42 percent said one should be held only if Trump wins.

*40 percent said the Trump administration had provided accurate information on the president's health, while 56 percent said it hadn't.

The poll of 789 likely Wisconsin voters had a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percentage points. The sample was 29 percent Dem and 29 percent Republican. Also, 41 percent of respondents said they backed Trump in 2016, while 40 percent said they supported Hillary Clinton.

The previous poll, taken Sept. 8-10, showed 50 percent of likely Wisconsin voters supported Biden, 43 percent supported Trump and 2 percent were in favor of Jorgensen.

See [more](#).

— A Reuters/Ipsos released the same day also showed Biden leading in Wisconsin among likely voters.

The poll, conducted Oct. 6-11, found 51 percent of likely Wisconsin voters favored Biden, while 44 percent favored Trump.

Additionally, 20 percent of respondents said they had already voted.

Biden also led Trump in the poll when it came to who voters trusted to handle the COVID-19 pandemic and to manage the economy, 52-38 and 47-46 respectively.

Biden led the state by 6 points in a poll conducted from Sept. 29 to Oct. 5.

See [more](#).

— President Trump's Saturday campaign stop in Janesville will be at the airport.

The campaign earlier this week sent an invite to a pre-event fundraiser in Janesville. Late Oct. 13, the campaign formally announced the 6 p.m. rally.

The event will be two weeks after Trump was originally scheduled to be in Janesville for a rally, but canceled due to his COVID-19 diagnosis.

The campaign says all attendees will have their temperature checked and masks, “which they are instructed to wear.” They also will have access to hand sanitizer.

The campaign website to apply for tickets includes a waiver acknowledging the risks of exposure to COVID-19 in a public place that also releases the campaign, host venue and others from any liability for illness or injury.

See the ticket [website](#).

— Vice President Mike Pence in his 10th 2020 campaign visit to Wisconsin touted the nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court to a crowd of several hundred in Waukesha.

“I’ll make your prediction: Judge Amy Coney Barrett will soon be Justice Amy Coney Barrett,” he said at an Oct. 13 campaign rally set outside of Weldall Manufacturing as Barrett answered questions from senators on the Judiciary Committee. “We’re going to fill that seat.”

Pence also attacked Joe Biden for largely dodging questions on calls from the left to expand the number of justices on the high court.

“When you’re running for the highest office in the land, the American people deserve to know if you’re going to respect the highest court in the land,” he said. “The only explanation about why they aren’t answering the question is because Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are planning to pack the court with liberal judges if they win this election.”

See more [here](#).

— U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman is the most loyal member of Congress to President Trump, a new analysis from Axios finds.

The Trump loyalty index compares data from a FiveThirtyEight tracker that records

votes in favor of or against Trump-supported bills with how lawmakers reacted to seven controversial moments.

The Glenbuelah Republican scored 93 out of 100 possible points.

Grothman was the only member of the Wisconsin delegation to offer some level of support to Trump in all seven instances Axios examined. Axios determined supportiveness by examining press statements and interviews regarding each controversial moment to see how each representative reacted.

U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, R-Janesville, ranked as the second-most loyal member of the delegation to the president, reaching an index score of 76. U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson and U.S. Reps. Mike Gallagher, R-Green Bay, and Jim Sensenbrenner, R-Menomonee Falls, scored 70, 63 and 72, respectively.

Axios did not provide an index score for U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany because he has only been a member of Congress since May.

See the index [here](#).

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson slammed “the really jaw-dropping arrogance and disrespect” from Dem presidential nominee Joe Biden after he and vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris largely dodged questions on a potential expansion of the number of justices on the Supreme Court.

Calls from some on the left to consider such an expansion have ramped up in recent weeks after the death of liberal Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and nomination of conservative Judge Amy Coney Barrett.

Many Dems have charged the decision by Senate Republicans to move forward with Barrett’s nomination is hypocritical, given the GOP-controlled Senate’s decision in 2016 to block the nomination of Judge Merrick Garland, a nominee of outgoing President Barack Obama. Senate Republicans at the time argued Garland’s nomination, put forward following the death of Justice Antonin Scalia in 2016, should be filled after the presidential election in order to allow the American public to weigh in.

A number of GOP senators including Johnson, R-Oshkosh, have reversed course

from 2016, arguing now that Barrett should be confirmed because Republicans have control of both the White House and the Senate.

Those arguments have in part fueled calls from the left for Biden to expand the court should he win the presidency. Biden has demurred when quizzed by reporters on expanding the court, saying his answer would be seized upon by the media and distract from more pressing issues at hand.

Speaking with reporters on Oct. 12 ahead of the first day of Barrett's confirmation hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Johnson slammed Biden for that answer.

"It is jaw-droppingly arrogant and disrespectful to American people not to tell them what you are going to do if you get elected," he said.

A spokeswoman for the state Dem Party fired back Johnson "still wants the Supreme Court to take away your health care" in the midst of a global pandemic

See [more](#).

— Johnson told reporters he is not suffering symptoms after testing positive for COVID-19 earlier this month. But he said an Oct. 5 follow-up test also produced a positive test.

Still, the Oshkosh Republican said he's "been set free" after a 10-day period since his initial diagnosis. Guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control advise those who test positive for COVID-19 can be around others after a period of 10 days after their symptoms first appear coupled with 24 fever-free hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement of other symptoms.

Johnson first announced he tested positive for the virus on Oct. 3 after taking a test on the way to a GOP fundraiser in Mequon one day earlier.

He told reporters he had a doctor's appointment on Oct. 5 where he again tested positive. He added a chest X-ray taken during that appointment showed "completely clean lungs" and a "total blood workup" came back "totally normal."

"I'm just one of those very fortunate ones that suffer no symptoms," he said.

— U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont, tweeted Oct. 13 this will be his last term as co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

Pocan tweeted he will continue as chair emeritus of the group and co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus PAC, which seeks to elect more progressives to Congress.

“It’s been an impactful almost 4 years–growing membership, expanding political work & fighting for progressive policies,” Pocan tweeted. “I’ll keep fighting to ensure that this remains the people’s House.”

See the thread [here](#).

— U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein shared the medical story of state Rep. Jimmy Anderson, D-Fitchburg, as part of the Oct. 13 Judiciary Committee hearings over Judge Amy Coney Barrett’s nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The California Dem said U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, asked her to share Anderson’s story before the committee. And she told Barrett and other listeners how Anderson’s family, while leaving a celebration for his 24th birthday in 2010, was struck by a drunken driver, killing his mother, father and little brother and leaving him paralyzed from the waist down.

See more [here](#).

Watch on [C-SPAN](#).

— Wisconsin voters again face an Election Day deadline to return their absentee ballots after a split federal appeals court on Oct. 8 put on hold a ruling that had extended it by six days.

In the 2-1 ruling, the majority found federal Judge William Conley’s ruling violated a U.S. Supreme Court standard guarding against changes to state standards too close

to an election. The majority also found Wisconsin voters have had plenty of time to prepare for casting their ballots under normal deadlines amid a pandemic.

Conley issued a similar order in the days ahead of the April election, and the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals signed off on significant pieces of that decision. But the court noted Wisconsin has put on two elections since, in April and in August, and voters have had plenty of time to prepare to cast their ballot in November under the normal deadlines.

Conley, the majority found, focused largely on those voters who waited until the last minute to decide they wanted to avoid voting in person. The court noted the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on Conley's April order that "voters who wait until the last minute face problems with or without a pandemic."

See more [here](#).

Read the [ruling](#).

— Some of the groups that sought changes to the November election will ask the U.S. Supreme Court to reinstate a ruling that extended the deadline for absentee ballots, one of their attorneys tells WisPolitics.com

A split 7th Circuit Court of Appeals last week stayed federal Judge William Conley's ruling that had extended the deadline by six days to Nov. 9. The majority found Conley's ruling violated a U.S. Supreme Court standard guarding against changes to state standards too close to an election. The 2-1 ruling also found Wisconsin voters have had plenty of time to prepare for casting their ballots under normal deadlines amid a pandemic.

The ruling leaves in effect Wisconsin's deadline of 8 p.m. Election Day for absentee ballots to be returned to local clerks.

— Two applications have now been filed asking the U.S. Supreme Court to take a case that could impact the deadline for Wisconsin's absentee ballots.

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans and several state residents filed their application Oct. 12, as did Disability Rights Wisconsin, Black Leaders Organizing for Communities and three voters.

Judge William Conley's ruling extending the deadline for absentee ballots came after he combined four separate suits into one case. Plaintiffs in the other two lawsuits are also expected to file their applications.

The filings from both groups of plaintiffs argued the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals was wrong in issuing an order preventing enforcement of Conley's order. A split appeals court ruled the order was issued too close to the election, violating Supreme Court precedent that discourages changes to state election procedures too close to voters going to the polls.

One of the filings argues the 7th Circuit applied the principle arbitrarily.

Read the applications: [here](#) and [here](#).

— Three of the Legislature's top Republicans signed onto a letter Oct.11 urging "a prompt, objective and fair hearing" followed by a swift confirmation of Amy Coney Barrett to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The letter, signed by lawmakers from all 50 states, praises Barrett's qualifications as "undeniable." The letter, sent to U.S. Senate leaders and top members of the Judiciary Committee, also warns against "a repeat of the personal attacks to which Justice Brett Kavanaugh and his family were subjected."

See more [here](#).

See the [letter](#).

— U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, and Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, met virtually with Wisconsinites and Ohioans who have a pre-existing health condition and are at risk of losing access to health care coverage if the Affordable Care Act is overturned.

See the [release](#).

Posts of the week

The DMC provides important risk management tools and can serve as a critical safety net for our dairy farmers. I encourage all interested dairy farmers to look into the DMC and see if it might be right for them.

<https://t.co/0TB0r9DPkC>

— Archive: Rep. Ron Kind (@RepRonKind) [October 13, 2020](#)

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CGFs-gXILzU/>

Happy 245th Birthday to the U.S. Navy! <pic.twitter.com/XrZryYcA6G>

— Bryan Steil (@RepBryanSteil) [October 14, 2020](#)

I stand with our local law enforcement!

I am thankful for their dedication to serving the people of Wisconsin and keeping us all safe. Thank a local law enforcement officer today!

<pic.twitter.com/1BBmoCyt5g>

— Tom Tiffany (@TomTiffanyWI) [October 10, 2020](#)

As Coronavirus cases rise in NEW, we have to get back to the basics:

washing our hands, maintaining social distance, and wearing a mask when appropriate.

Today I'm launching a new site to get you more info on the virus and ways to help slow the spread: <https://t.co/LCjARdrbP1>
pic.twitter.com/I4fjvBXRuV

— Rep. Gallagher Press Office (@RepGallagher) [October 14, 2020](#)

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CGQIHCXj7s1/>

ICYMI

[Covid crisis colors Wisconsin race](#)

[Trump Defectors Help Biden Build Leads in Wisconsin and Michigan](#)

[Derrick Van Orden says Ron Kind denied justice to woman who accused NFL players of rape in 1995](#)

[Accused Michigan Terrorists Have Ties To Extremist Group Active In Wisconsin](#)

[Election 2020: Trump, Biden campaigns vie for Indigenous votes in swing state of Wisconsin](#)

[In reversal, court says Wisconsin absentee ballots must be returned by Election Day](#)

[Wisconsin Democrats sidestep question of whether they support expanding the Supreme Court](#)